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FOREIGN NEWS ON CITRUS FRUIT

SOUTH AFRICAN CITRUS FRUIT INDUSTRY SHOWS EXPANSION

That the South African citrus fruit industry is growing rapidly is amply evidenced by the results of a special census of commercial citrus fruit trees recently made by the Office of Census and Statistics of the Union of South Africa. According to this census there are in the Union at the present time 2,535,000^a commercial orange trees, 97,590 commercial grapefruit trees and 516,000 trees of other citrus fruit such as tangerines and lemons. The census shows that 59 per cent of the orange trees and 84 per cent of the grapefruit trees are below five years of age, from which the conclusion may be drawn that within a relatively short period twice the volume of citrus fruit will be coming forward for export from South Africa than is the case at present. Moreover, the census shows that an additional 671,730 orange and 106,095 grapefruit trees are to be planted within the next two or three years.

Exports

Exports of oranges from South Africa have increased from 321,997 cases in 1924 to 502,925 cases in 1926. Grapefruit exports during the same period increased from 14,671 cases in 1924 to 24,364 cases in 1926. Oranges comprise over 95 per cent of the total citrus fruit exports of South Africa. The United Kingdom takes practically all of the exports. According to the South African Citrus Fruit Export Act of 1927, the minimum weight of a box of oranges of sizes 80 to 126 can not be less than 72 pounds. All longer counts must not weigh less than 75 pounds per packed box. In the case of grapefruit the minimum weight can not be less than 62 pounds for all counts up to 64's; for counts above that number the minimum weight can not be less than 65 pounds per packed box. No counts above 150 per box can be exported.

Domestic consumption

The domestic consumption of commercial citrus fruit in the Union has increased from 658,146 cases of oranges in 1924 to 1,202,992 cases in 1926. In the case of grapefruit the domestic consumption has increased from 3,530 cases in 1924 to 55,862 cases in 1926. These figures do not include the consumption from non-commercial trees. Considering the fact that the total white population which accounts for most of the domestic consumption of citrus fruit in the Union is only about 1,776,000, it can be seen that any material increase in production will have to find an outlet mainly in the export market.

Production

Adding exports to the number of cases disposed of in the Union, it appears that the commercial crop of oranges in 1926 amounted to 1,706,000 cases as compared with 970,143 cases in 1924. In the case of grapefruit the

^a/ Total Navels and Valencias. See table next page.

1926 commercial crop totaled 70,000 cases as against 18,000 cases in 1924. The census figures show that the South African commercial citrus fruit industry is centered in the three Provinces of the Transvaal, Cape of Good Hope and Natal. The geographical distribution of the trees shows that the Transvaal is by far the most important producer of oranges although there have been considerable new plantings in the past three years in the Cape Province. In grapefruit the Cape Province has the largest number of trees, due mainly to plantings within the past three years but there have also been considerable plantings during the same period in the Transvaal.

The census figures on new plantings of oranges show that the Valencias are gaining in popularity throughout the Union. This gain seems to be principally at the expense of the Navels. No doubt the main reason for the shift is the preference in British markets for an orange of moderate size and of good flavor. The South African Navels are reported by Consul C.M. Cross at Cape Town as being somewhat inferior in flavor and the small sizes not as attractive as the seedlings.

The following tables give the number of citrus fruit trees in commercial orchards in South Africa during 1927.

CITRUS FRUIT: Number of trees in the Union of South Africa, 1927

Fruit and Province	Under 3 years	Between 3-4 years	Between 5-7 years	8 years and over	Total
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>
ORANGES a/					
Cape	351,025	122,953	148,726	245,092	867,796
Natal	21,903	38,627	40,783	32,809	134,122
Transvaal	575,931	600,335	472,160	400,134	2,048,610
Total	948,909	761,915	661,669	678,035	3,050,528
GRAPEFRUIT:					
Cape	44,845	2,790	2,778	5,653	56,066
Natal	2,864	1,215	260	56	4,395
Transvaal	24,095	6,022	2,920	4,092	37,129
Total	71,804	10,027	5,958	9,801	97,590

Source: Compiled from 1927 Census Report of the Union of South Africa.

a/ Includes relatively small quantities of tangerines and lemons.

ORANGES: Number of trees of different varieties in South Africa, 1927

Age of trees	Navels	Valencias	Other Varieties a/	Total a/
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>
Over 8 years	334,464	30,018	253,553	678,035
5 to 7 years	411,501	192,094	52,074	661,669
3 to 4 years	393,663	296,026	72,226	761,915
Under 3 years	408,730	402,090	138,089	948,909
Total	1,548,358	986,228	515,942	3,050,528

Source: Compiled from 1927 Census Report of the Union of South Africa.

a/ Includes tangerines and lemons.

